

Explanation of Amendments in the Claims:

1.(currently amended) Apparatus for transporting particulate material comprising:

a vacuum system including an air pump having a vacuum side and an outlet side, an inlet opening for receiving an inlet stream of air generated by the vacuum side of the pump and containing the particulate material to be transported, a separation system for separating the particulate material from the inlet air stream for passage of the air stream through the pump and an outlet duct for receiving the air stream from the outlet side of the pump and for transporting the particulate material from the separation system to an outlet location;

an inlet nozzle assembly movable at an inlet location for collecting the particulate materials to be transported from the inlet location by the inlet air stream;

and a flexible hose connected between the inlet nozzle assembly and the inlet opening of the vacuum system and arranged to provide sufficient flexibility to allow movement of the inlet nozzle assembly to required locations at the inlet location;

the flexible hose being arranged to provide flexibility to allow free movement of the inlet nozzle assembly to required locations at the bulk supply of the crop materials;

the flexible hose having at least three tubular rigid metal portions and at least two three tubular flexible polymeric portions with the rigid portions and the flexible portions being connected end to end in a row alternately ~~so that each rigid portion is connected at its ends to respective ones of two flexible portions and each flexible portion is connected at its ends to respective ones of two rigid portions.~~

2.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein each flexible portion is connected at its end to a rigid portion by a hose clamp which clamps an end surrounding piece of the flexible portion onto the end of the rigid portion.

3.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the hose is formed substantially wholly along its length from the nozzle assembly to the inlet opening by alternating flexible pieces and rigid pieces.

4.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein all the rigid pieces are of substantially equal length.

5.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein both the rigid pieces and the flexible pieces are substantially of equal length.

6.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein each rigid and each flexible piece is at least 12 inches in length.

7.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein no rigid nor flexible piece has a length greater than 24 inches.

8.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the hose includes two manually graspable handles with one on each of the first two rigid pieces.

9.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the hose includes air flow control opening on one of the rigid pieces located adjacent to the inlet opening.

10.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the hose and a mouth of the hose are cylindrical and wherein the nozzle assembly forms a slot.

11.(original) The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein each of the flexible pieces is formed from a length of a transversely corrugated hose.

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

24. (currently amended) Apparatus for transporting particulate material

comprising:

a vacuum system including an air pump having a vacuum side and an outlet side, an inlet opening for receiving an inlet stream of air generated by the vacuum side of the pump and containing the particulate material to be transported, a separation system for separating the particulate material from the inlet air stream for passage of the air stream through the pump and an outlet duct for receiving the air stream from the outlet side of the pump and for transporting the particulate material from the separation system to an outlet location;

an inlet nozzle assembly movable at an inlet location for collecting the particulate materials to be transported from the inlet location by the inlet air stream;

and a flexible hose;

the flexible hose having a first rigid tubular metal portion connected at a forward end to the inlet nozzle assembly;

the flexible hose having a second rigid tubular metal portion releasably connected at a rearward end to the inlet opening;

the flexible hose being arranged to provide flexibility to allow free movement of the inlet nozzle assembly to required locations at the bulk supply of the crop materials;

the flexible hose having at least one tubular rigid metal intermediate portions and at least two tubular flexible polymeric portions with the rigid portions and the flexible portions being connected end to end in a row alternately;

and an air inlet opening provided on one of the tubular rigid metal portions spaced from the first tubular rigid metal portion such that the air inlet opening is separated from the first tubular rigid metal portion by at least one of the tubular flexible polymeric portions

a first hose piece connected to the inlet opening;

a second hose piece formed at least partly of flexible material connected between the inlet nozzle assembly and the inlet opening of the vacuum system and arranged to provide sufficient flexibility to allow movement of the inlet nozzle assembly to required locations at the inlet location;

wherein the hose includes air flow control opening on second hose piece located at a position therealong adjacent to the first hose piece for controlling entry into the first hose piece of additional exterior air.

25. (cancelled)

Add new claims as follows:

26.(new) Apparatus for transporting particulate material comprising:

a vacuum system including an air pump having a vacuum side and an outlet side, an inlet opening for receiving an inlet stream of air generated by the vacuum side of the pump and containing the particulate material to be transported, a separation system for separating the particulate material from the inlet air stream for passage of the air stream through the pump and an outlet duct for receiving the air stream from the outlet side of the pump and for transporting the particulate material from the separation system to an outlet location;

an inlet nozzle assembly movable at an inlet location for collecting the particulate materials to be transported from the inlet location by the inlet air stream;

and a flexible hose;

the flexible hose having a first rigid tubular metal portion connected at a forward end to the inlet nozzle assembly;

the flexible hose having a second rigid tubular metal portion releasably connected at a rearward end to the inlet opening;

the flexible hose being arranged to provide flexibility to allow free movement of the inlet nozzle assembly to required locations at the bulk supply of the crop materials;

the flexible hose having at least two tubular rigid metal intermediate portions and at least three tubular flexible polymeric portions with the rigid portions and the flexible portions being connected end to end in a row alternately.

27.(new) Apparatus for transporting particulate material comprising:

a vacuum system including an air pump having a vacuum side and an outlet side, an inlet opening for receiving an inlet stream of air generated by the vacuum side of the pump and containing the particulate material to be transported, a separation system for separating the particulate material from the inlet air stream for passage of the air stream through the pump and an outlet duct for receiving the air stream from the outlet side of the pump and for transporting the particulate material from the separation system to an outlet location;

an inlet nozzle assembly movable at an inlet location for collecting the particulate materials to be transported from the inlet location by the inlet air stream;

and a flexible hose;

the flexible hose having a first rigid tubular metal portion connected at a forward end to the inlet nozzle assembly;

the flexible hose having a second rigid tubular metal portion releasably connected at a rearward end to the inlet opening;

the flexible hose being arranged to provide flexibility to allow free movement of the inlet nozzle assembly to required locations at the bulk supply of the crop materials;

the flexible hose having at least one tubular rigid metal intermediate portion and at least two tubular flexible polymeric portions with the rigid portions and the flexible portions being connected end to end in a row alternately;

a first air inlet opening provided on the first tubular rigid metal portion which opening is separate from the nozzle;

and a second air inlet opening provided on one of the tubular rigid metal portions spaced from the first tubular rigid metal portion such that the second air inlet opening is separated from the first tubular rigid metal portion by at least one of the tubular flexible polymeric portions.

28.(new) Apparatus for transporting particulate material comprising:

a vacuum system including an air pump having a vacuum side and an outlet side, an inlet opening for receiving an inlet stream of air generated by the vacuum side of the pump and containing the particulate material to be transported, a separation system for separating the particulate material from the inlet air stream for passage of the air stream through the pump and an outlet duct for receiving the air stream from the outlet side of the pump and for transporting the particulate material from the separation system to an outlet location;

an inlet nozzle assembly movable at an inlet location for collecting the particulate materials to be transported from the inlet location by the inlet air stream;

and a flexible hose;

the flexible hose having a first rigid tubular metal portion connected at a forward end to the inlet nozzle;

the flexible hose being connected at a rearward end to the inlet opening;

the flexible hose being arranged to provide flexibility to allow free movement of the inlet nozzle assembly to required locations at the bulk supply of the crop materials;

the flexible hose having at least one additional tubular rigid metal portion and at least one tubular flexible polymeric portion with the rigid portions and the at least one flexible portion being connected end to end in a row alternately;

and an air inlet opening provided on the at least one additional tubular rigid metal portions which is spaced from the nozzle by the at least one flexible polymeric portion.

29.(new) The flexible hose according to Claim 28 wherein there is provided a first air inlet opening on the first tubular rigid metal portion which opening is separate from the nozzle.